

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Subregion: SOUTH CENTRAL **County:** MARIPOSA

Applicant: UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

Project Title: MERCED RIVER CENTER PHASE I

Reference Number: SNC 070297

PROJECT SCOPE

The Upper Merced River Watershed Council will remodel and improve the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Visitor Center at Briceburg, located where Highway 140 meets the Merced River, including the following actions:

- Change the name of the center to the Merced River Center at Briceburg;
- Install a french drain to protect the building from moisture;
- Remodel the interior by removing a non-historic wall;
- Install new carpet and repair a damaged section of the floor;
- Update lighting and replace doors;
- Construct a counter and movable bookshelves;
- Paint walls, soffits, and railings;
- Purchase community-room equipment, including chairs and tables;
- Install signage and flags to communicate the building's purpose and hours of operations;
- Install storage to relocate items currently stored within the building;
- Install year-round portable restrooms in the parking lot;
- Work through CalTrans to lower the speed limit, install better signage, and construct turn lane.

The Council will also engage high school students to create a Merced River Mural, which will be the first of many interpretative displays to occupy the updated facility inside and outside.

This project is the first of two phases, with the second to result in the opening of the Center as an educational venue for students of all ages, community groups volunteering to protect the Merced River, and tourists and recreationalists visiting the Center and its peripheral recreational sites, including river access trails and campgrounds.

The Council will utilize in-kind services from the BLM and other partners, totaling \$11,160, in meeting the scope of this grant as defined above.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Develop bid package for building renovations	April 2008 - July 2008
Initiate bid process, evaluate bids, and award contract	April 2008 - July 2008
Initiate building renovations	July 2008 - September 2008
Initiate mural design with Mariposa High School	July 2008 - September 2008
Initiate work with Cal Trans for road signs, turn lane, and speed limit	July 2008 - September 2008
Install gravel pad and replacement storage unit	July 2008 - September 2008
Complete and submit 6-month progress report to SNC	September 2008

Purchase building fixtures (heater, sink, tables, chairs)	October 2008 - December 2008
Design welcome flag; Buy and install pole and flags	October 2008 - December 2008
Procure materials for mural and begin production	October 2008 - December 2008
Contact and procure contractor for signage design production	October 2008 - December 2008
Post job announcement for Educator/Naturalist for Summer 2009	January 2009 – March 2009
Conduct community forum on Phase II components	January 2009 – March 2009
Conduct interviews for advertised position	January 2009 – March 2009
Install building signage	January 2009 – March 2009
Complete and submit 12-month progress report to SNC	March 2009
Complete and install mural	April 2009 - June 2009
Complete building renovations and prepare facility for opening	June 2009
Host “Grand Opening” event for public	June 2009
Conduct second community forum on Phase II components	July 2009
Final Report/Final Payment Request	September 2009

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project Management Staff	\$ 34,320
Workers Compensation	\$ 412
Small Room Rehabilitation	\$ 10,000
Large Room Rehabilitation	\$ 20,000
Storage Container	\$ 2,250
Flagpole, flag, and open sign	\$ 1,000
Fixtures	\$ 1,830
Security Cameras	\$ 3,500
Building Signage	\$ 3,000
Mural design and production	\$ 5,000
Administration	\$ 11,796
GRAND TOTAL	\$ 93,108

Letters of Support:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Yosemite Area Audubon Society
- University of California, Merced

Recommendation:

Recommend at requested amount of \$93,108.

SNC 070297

Project Name: Merced River Center at Briceburg

Phase I – Building renovation

Project Summary: The Briceburg Visitor Center on the Merced River is an underused historic stone building managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is located on a well-documented archeological site and the building itself has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. Although the center is located at the very point where the Wild and Scenic Merced River is first seen by in-bound Yosemite National Park tourists, it averages only 1,600 visitors annually. Most of the park's 800,000 visitors that travel past the center are oblivious to the center as well as their first opportunity to view the raging river that carved the park's crown jewel, Yosemite Valley.

Why is this gem so overlooked by the area's 18,000 local inhabitants, nearly a million Yosemite tourists, and the thousands of campers and visitors that use the adjacent BLM Recreation Area? It is a result of limited hours (open only on weekends during the summer, closed the remainder of the year), poor signage, inadequate public outreach and marketing, and limited educational displays. This project addresses these issues and transforms the center to a place that welcomes visitors and showcases the Merced River watershed and its diverse ecosystem.

This proposal is a collaboration between the BLM and the Mariposa County Resource Conservation District's Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) as an effort to protect and enhance the Merced River Watershed.

Proposed Work: Phase I: To remodel and improve the center in preparation for Phase II, SOG 3 grant under separate application. Phase II: Provide a secure, appealing watershed education facility with an increase in educational staffing for the public and community.

1. Change the name of the center to the Merced River Center at Briceburg.
2. Install a French drain to protect the building from moisture
3. Remodel the interior by removing a non-historic wall, installing new carpet, repairing a section of floor, enhancing lighting, replacing doors, constructing a counter and movable bookshelves, painting walls, soffits and railings, purchasing community room equipment (chairs, tables, etc.).
4. Engage high school students to create a Merced River mural.
5. Install signs and flags to communicate the building's purpose as well as hours of operation.
6. Install a storage container to relocate items currently stored in the building.
7. Install year-round portable restrooms in the existing parking lot.
8. Work with Caltrans to lower the speed limit and install better signage and a left turn lane entry.

Anticipated Results: 1) provide opportunities to learn about the Merced River and its watershed, 2) increase tourist and community visitation to the center, 3) diversify as well as increase use of the center by enhancing interpretive displays and creating a multi-purpose room available for community education.

Estimated Cost: Total project cost is \$104,718. Over \$11,610 has been donated through in-kind services by the BLM and other community partners. The total grant being requested is \$93,108.